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Lodi Winegrape Grower Brad Lange Heads PD/GWSS Board's New Slate of Officers

Sacramento, CA — Jan 15, 2005 - Brad Lange, a Lodi-area winegrape grower, has been selected to chair the 15-member grower board charged with overseeing statewide research and control efforts related to Pierce's disease and the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS). California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Secretary A.G. Kawamura confirmed the board's recent election of Lange and fellow officers Vice Chair Pete Downs of Kendall Jackson Wine Estates in Sonoma and Treasurer Jim Unti of Canandaigua Wine Company in Madera.

Lange, formerly the board's vice chair, replaces Bob Steinhauer of Beringer Blass Wine Estates in St. Helena, who was applauded for his efforts by the board and by Secretary Kawamura at the group's November meeting. "We need more people like Bob, who has always been willing to step up to the plate and lead," said Kawamura. "He understands that Pierce's disease and GWSS are a threat to a cherished way of life in California, not just to a specific agricultural commodity." Kawamura presented Steinhauer with a plaque commemorating his service and thanked him for his leadership.

In his closing remarks, Steinhauer said, "It has been a real privilege to serve the board. We've worked well together on a common cause. I'm pleased that we've been so successful, and I'm committed to continuing that success in coming years." Steinhauer will continue to serve on the board.

The PD/GWSS Board is made up of growers and processors from California's major winegrape growing regions and is responsible for making program and research funding recommendations to the CDFA. Pierce's disease has no known cure, and left unchecked, it could be devastating to the grape industry and several other California crops.